

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2006, 6pm-8pm

City Hall L280

1. Call to order and introductions 6:05

SPAB members in attendance: Jodie Vice (Chair), Matthew Amster-Burton, Peg Staeheli, Molly McCarthy (Vice Chair), Jean Healy, Maria Koengeter, Chris Tachibana (Board Secretary), Rob Ketcherside

SDOT representative: Megan Hoyt

Absent: Nicole DeFrank, Rob Fellows

Public: Charles Smith (previous SPAB member); Howard Wu and Benjamin Smith (Board Candidates)

Presenter from SDOT: SunHee Helm

2. Approval of November and December Minutes 6:07

Move to approve from Amster-Burton, second from McCarthy, vote to approve minutes

3. Update on the Pike/Pine Crosswalk Study (Draft) - SunHee Helm and Megan Hoyt 6:08

Hoyt gave some background. The last presentation to SPAB on this study was last January. The study was conducted after a request from the Pike-Pine neighborhood for more marked crosswalks. The usual aim is to mark preferred crossings, based on criteria such as visibility and crossing distance, but these criteria do not address areas with lots of people at all intersections, over a whole corridor. This study asks if adding marked crosswalks can result in more walking and more driver compliance with no increases in collisions.

Vice asked about boundaries.

Hoyt answered Bellevue and 14th on Pike and Pine, anyplace without traffic a signal. SDOT policy was applied in that area using criteria of pedestrian volume and number of traffic lanes, but Pike Pine corridor has changed since then.

Helm described the "before" aspect of the study, done in 2004. Data were collected at 30 minute time intervals at seven sites at 11a.m.-1p.m. and at 4-6 p.m. Measurements were of individual or groups making crosstrips, and whether they stepped onto street or remained on sidewalk. Both eastbound and westbound vehicles were counted and were assessed for whether or not they

stopped for pedestrians. Crosstrips were evaluated for whether they occurred during gap in traffic or not.

Hoyt stated that the point of analysis was to evaluate the pedestrian experience, for example how long they waited before being able to cross. Findings included that fifty percent crossed during a gap in traffic. This occurred most often during the noon evaluation period, when more traffic gaps occurred.

In the after study, eleven percent more crosstrips occurred. (Note that the data are not considered statistically significant, but a spot check of the area). Observers noticed a lot of people don't step off curb, which is significant because the law is that driver must stop if someone is *on* the roadway. (SPAB members were unclear about the exact wording of the law, but it is for example, something like being within a half-lane.) Many people looked like they wanted to cross, especially at curb bulbs, but were not *on* the roadway. Before the study: 28% did not step off curb. In the "after" analysis, 43% did not step off curb. This occurred especially at newly marked crosswalks, so people became less aggressive.

Another aspect of the study was driver compliance. Unmarked and previously marked crosswalks were measured as controls against newly marked areas. Of these measured areas one had better, one had worse driver compliance. Conclusion: on paper, the addition of new crosswalk markings did not change driver compliance.

Helm observed that at East Pine and 10th, there were a lot people aggressively crossing mid-block last summer. This summer after the new crosswalks, there were fewer mid-block crossings. Hoyt noted that East Pine and 10th is a T-intersection and many people don't realize there are legal crosswalks at T.

Collision data were analyzed. The area has about four collisions a year and there were three in the time after the new crosswalks. However, more time is needed to see patterns, so the study will look at a three-year data set before concluding.

Crossings left unmarked include Pine and Summit, which SDOT would like to mark. 13th at Pike and at Pine are also unmarked and SDOT recommends that they stay unmarked. There is a signal at 12th and 14th, so that is left unmarked for now.

Any future crosswalk markings in the area must meet various visibility and pedestrian volume criteria; must be a high pedestrian use area with destinations on either side; must have other pedestrian-oriented land use and designs, so a crosswalk won't be expected to replace other pedestrian-oriented features.

C Smith asked about the impact of new developments in that area.

Hoyt said a development one block away at 14th and 15th, could have an impact, but doesn't change the feel of 13th. Will keep looking at it once the development is in place.

Staeheli asked about analysis of driver speed.

Hoyt said speed studies were done in 2000 but not used here.

Amster-Burton has noticed improvement in bus compliance at the crosswalks.

Healy asked where the accidents occurred.

Hoyt said data were from all over the Pike-Pine corridor, with no particular location because collisions are happily infrequent.

Ben Smith commented on various issues at Belmont and Howell, 14th at Union/Spring, Boylston and Harvard and Pike, and 13th at Pike and Pine. Because of lights in area, people speed up for or after the light.

Hoyt noted both locations have unique characteristics, for example there is a crosswalk on only one side at Boylston because of the hill. Drivers can see one is better than other, so only one is being marked. One criterion is always "would a marked crosswalk benefit people here?"

Pike and Harvard is not marked and was not considered because it is on the signal needs list and should be addressed this year.

Ben Smith commented that there is a 5-story development proposal for the NW corner of 13th and Pine that might mean more pedestrians. He suggested keeping POWHAT Capitol Hill neighborhood group informed.

Hoyt commented that Pike Pine Urban Neighborhood Coalition (PPUNC) funded the study so they will likely be getting a presentation that could be expanded to other groups.

Vice asked who requested and funded the study.

Hoyt said PPUNC, not sure why, but possibly from frustration with crossings and the idea that crosswalks should be part of an urban business district. Since the Convention Center took views from Pike-Pine, some money was given to neighborhood groups.

Ketcherside commented that Boren Park also came from that and Jill Janow drove the idea that area should be walkable.

B Smith mentioned that PPUNC has started to reactivate.

Tachibana asked if this study will mean adding more marked crosswalks in other neighborhoods.

Hoyt said the study didn't come up with specific policy, but gave ingredients and guidance for how to answer future, similar requests, for example, what people can tell developers.

Amster-Burton said it didn't hurt or help to add marked crosswalks, so the study says that SDOT can suggest other factors for groups to ask developers for.

Hoyt added there is a lot this study brings up including new study ideas, which also ties to an email Rob Fellows sent earlier in the week about a TRB study on possible pedestrian research subjects. For example, if marking crosswalks doesn't change driver compliance, maybe there are things people can do to indicate crossing, like handsignals.

Staeheli asked what is in the drivers' education manual about pedestrians.

General discussion ensued on cultural and neighborhood-specific behaviors regarding drivers and pedestrians.

5. Round Robin 6:45

Koengeter wrote a letter about the Aurora project presented last meeting. She has moved to West Seattle and is involved in the Pro Parks Levy/Orchard Street Ravine Project. The levy dictates a trail, but the Parks Department wants a loop trail because of the slope. There was general agreement that a connecting trail between parks in area would be better, but there may be safety issues.

Staeheli commented that the Orchard Street Ravine Project came from the urban village idea that wanted linkages as there are not good east-west connections.

Koengeter said a loop trail is a compromise, because there must be a trail but a loop is the least environmentally offensive.

Healy had nothing to report.

Staeheli was at the Safe Kids are Cool Kids calendars presentation, but didn't manage to get any calendars. She is disturbed by the high number of pedestrian accidents lately, and general perception in the media that the pedestrian or bicyclist is at fault

McCarthy related an NPR story about a Chicago suburb that made stop signs with an extra "we really mean it" sign to prevent rolling stops. General discussion on unusual signs that make people slow down to look. She made calls regarding

the Rainier Ave Corridor plan, additional to the South Seattle Transportation study and called the police to talk about pedestrian education. She's waiting for responses.

Hoyt said the candidate process is on hold because there is no transportation chair for the City Council yet.

Vice spent ten days last month in the midwest in two different pedestrian environments. In Chicago, she took a bus, taxi, and the el, all in one day. In rural Illinois, the only place to walk was in a neighborhood with no sidewalks. She gave a positive report on the calendar event including an acknowledgement of SPAB by the Mayor. It can probably be viewed on the Seattle channel.

Tachibana asked if we could have input on the about City Council Interim Appointment. Resumes of the final six and 12 candidates will be on their website so we can put in a word, formally or informally. C Smith will send Tachibana a copy of letters he has sent to candidates before. Agreement that we will also invite the new member and the transportation chair to a meeting.

Ketcherside shared Tokyo stories, including observations of people who take crosswalks vs. an overpass at a crowded intersection near his hotel in the Shinogaro area (SE side of Tokyo). He noticed one intersection had a long light but with a correct countdown timer (unlike Seattle's). It had an inverted triangle that went from red to green, indicating when you would be able to cross, rather than how much longer you have to cross.

Hoyt mentioned she'd used those types of timers to decide to either cross or go to next intersection.

Amster-Burton mentioned that everyone likes the timers that indicates when the next bus or train comes. Hoyt said no public comments that she knows of, have been made about the countdown timers.

Staeheli said we should get Rob Fellows's opinion on the timers.

Ketcherside noted that Tokyo had wide intersection with high volume, but no matter how large the mob, everyone got across, as opposed to Weller street in Seattle, where people get off a Sounder train and there isn't enough time for everyone to cross. Seattle needs to time signals for pedestrians.

Amster-Burton commented on a trip to Vancouver with his family. He wrote the SPAB Annual Report, which will be on our website. He printed and has been distributing Molly's "Don't park here, this is a sidewalk" flyers.

Charles Smith wrote to thank last month's presenter for input on Aurora. He is investigating and photographing biking and pedestrian issues on the south end. He was in Vancouver, took pictures and will send a report.

6. Upcoming agenda 7:20

Vice said in February we'll have a Right of Way Manual overview from Peg and Matthew and maybe send a letter that we're not happy with it. We'll hear about budget from Peter Lagerwey. In March and April, we'll invite the new transportation chair and new city council member.

Other items including getting someone from the people's waterfront coalition to present. They represent the option of removing and not replacing the viaduct. General discussion on what data exists for making the decision and, why we don't close it for some months and see what happens? Data could come from the earthquake when the viaduct was shut down, or other cities, e.g. San Francisco, that removed a viaduct. Staeheli said WSDOT studied only the Battery/Mercer end and analysis focused on replacement. Analysis was limited, and plan changes may require legislation to change funding from highway to road.

Ketcherside mentioned that the state studies included having a monorail, but now that the monorail will not be built, there is no replacement plan.

Staeheli said to watch for upcoming charettes where the option of non-replacement may come up.

Staeheli asked Jean Healy if she had traveled on the rubber sidewalks around trees, which can move up over tree roots. It works for trees, but maybe not for pedestrians. Vice suggested it could be our field trip this year.

Healy went to a meeting last month for deaf or blind people in which an arborist asked about rubber sidewalks. One woman did have problems with her cane getting stuck because the sidewalk wasn't strong enough.

Hoyt suggested a general agenda point about getting SDOT people to talk on functions of the department. General agreement this would be a good idea.

Vice said other retreat plans could include the Pedestrian Master Plan. We might also invite people from North Link. We will have five new members soon, so we could pair up board members with candidates for mentoring.

7. Public comment 7:40

Howard Wu is volunteering for a "Quad Conference" (Portland, Vancouver, Victoria, Seattle) April 29th at Bellevue Sheraton. Technical papers on non-

motorized transport, pedestrian and bike issues are presented. Interested parties should write synopsis and submit to him:

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Farewell and thanks to Rob Ketcherside, who is moving to Japan.

8. Adjourn: 7:43